

Old Mud Meeting House
Three miles from Harrodsburg, Kentucky
Mercer Co

HABS No. 20-15
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 20

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
G. M. Grimes, District Officer
304 Martin Brown Building
Louisville, Kentucky

Name of structure: Old Mud Meeting House

Location: On Dry Branch Road, three miles from
Harrodsburg, Kentucky

Owner or
custodian: Pioneer Memorial Association

Address: Harrodsburg, Kentucky

Date built: 1800
(approx)

Architect
or builder: Members of the colony.

Present
condition: Very bad. Now being restored by the
Pioneer Memorial Association,
Harrodsburg, Kentucky.

Number of
stories: One

Material used
in constructuon: Foundation: Native stone.
Exterior walls: Weatherboarded (not
original.
Interior walls: Plastered (not original).
Floor: Heavy joists, covered with random
width tongue and groove flooring.
Roof: Frame construction, covered with
wood shingles.

Description:
architectural The construction of "Mud Meeting House"
and historical is probably one of the most unusual of
the early pioneer buildings.

On top of the stone foundation a heavy log sill
was laid, on top of which were erected square timbers extend-
ing up to the height of the main roof plate. These timbers
were spaced at intervals of several feet and were mortised
and tenoned into the main sill. The space between the
timbers, for their full thickness, was filled in with a
composition of mud and straw held in place by hand-split

hickory slats which were let into the vertical timbers. 34 HARROV
Many years later the building was weatherboarded on the
outside and plastered on the inside. Thus the name,
"Mud Meeting House" was derived from the use of mud in
its construction.

This building is probably the only one of its
type, using this particular construction, that is still
in existence in this part of the country.

The following is an extract from the History of
Mud Meeting House, by Dr. H. A. Scamp:

"Mud Meeting House is directly concerned
with those Dutch Colonists who, about 1765, began
to pour from New Jersey into the extreme west of
the then civilized world, York County in southern
Pennsylvania. These settlers, it is known, formed
the famous Conewago Colony.

"In 1796, as Corwins Manual, a New Jersey
record, informs us the synod of the Dutch Reformed
Presbyterian Church sent a missionary, Rev. Peter
LaBaugh, to the Salt River settlement south of
Harrodsburg, and he organized these members into
a church. We now find in Mercer County records
of the deed and the agreement for building this
pioneer Kentucky church which was erected in 1800,
about three miles south of Harrodsburg, Kentucky,
on a hill west of Dry Branch pike and east of Salt
River. This is the first Low Dutch Reformed Church
built west of the Alleghanies".

From some of the old records, preserved by the
Harrodsburg Historical Society, Harrodsburg, Kentucky, is
shown that three acres, "on which to erect a house of
worship to be used for that purpose forever", were deeded
by David Adams and Elizabeth, his wife, December 22, 1800,
"for four pounds, ten shillings, Virginia currency in
hand" to be paid by John Van Bryck, Isaac Venice, and
Peter Carnine, as agents of the Reformed Church.

The first pastor of this church was Dominie
Thomas Kyle and who is buried in the old graveyard adjoining
the church.

This old structure has been acquired by the
Harrodsburg Historical Society, Harrodsburg, Kentucky, in
a clear deed from The Dutch Reformed Church in America,
whose headquarters are in New York City.

G. M. Grimes

Revised 1936 by H.C.F.